

## **Rektor's Report – Quarterly Board Report - September 2017**

### **Summer News**

Looking back on the final fortnight of term, Graduation and the subsequent programme (including academic and cultural enrichment) for first years were delivered successfully and we finished the term in strong heart.

On the penultimate weekend of the term, the College in tandem with the Norwegian Red Cross ran the annual På Flukt ('On the Run') simulation for first year students. There had been much preparation in the build up to this event (marking the end of the first year RCN experience). Avis (RCN's Red Cross Coordinator) and the team leader from the Norwegian Red Cross – with support from a selection of Red Cross Youth Volunteers and RCN Education Staff – put together a simulation which saw students imagining themselves migrating to Norway. På Flukt is an integral part of the RCN Red Cross Diploma and aims to encourage students to look through the lens of others.

This summer saw the formal retirement of Arne Ophaug (Head of Services) and Vidar Jensen (Head of Maintenance). Both have served the College for 22 years since it was opened back in 1995 – with Vidar in fact working at Haugland for the past 30 years, from the time before the College and the Rehabilitation Centre were opened. Both have made an extraordinary contribution to the development of our College – and, as recognition of their unstinting commitment, we asked them to represent the College at a gala event in September 2016 in the gardens of the Royal Palace in Oslo with a special invitation from our patron, HM Queen Sonja. In the last College Meeting of last term, the students and staff gave them both a standing ovation as an expression of thanks for all that they have given and, on the Friday after the end of term, a special barbecue was put on in their honour. Vidar has kindly offered to be the project manager for the construction of the new baking house, next to the Silent House – and Arne has also offered to work part time up until the start of the new Head of Operations in October. The Fjaler Mayor will award a long service medal to Vidar at the beginning of the cultural show on the 21<sup>st</sup> September.

Simon Ramsay, member of staff at UWC RCN since 2015, took up the opportunity to teach at Waterford Kamhlaba, United World College of Southern Africa, for the month of June. He wrote a reflection for our website column 'People of RCN' and also gave a fascinating insight to Education Staff as to his experiences as part of Staff Introduction Week. One of the Deputy Principals at Waterford wrote: 'I really do want to thank you for sharing him. He was an amazing addition to our WK community this last month which just whizzed by! ... I found his insights into the school – staff, management and students - very intuitive and I appreciated his insights enormously.' Praise indeed.

In mid-June, a UWC Conference was held at Atlantic College with a focus on how to improve support for those students who come to UWCs from non-English-speaking backgrounds. Angie Toppan, RCN's Learning Support Coordinator, attended the conference. Arne Osland, our Director of Development, also attended a conference focused on finance at UWC Robert Bosch College. Daniel and Barbara Toa-Kwapong represented the College at the Africa NC Regional Meeting in Ghana.

In late June, Arne Osland and the Rektor coordinated a set of three meetings to connect with supporters in Stockholm, Mariehamn and Helsinki with the main focus on strengthening the partnership with Åland. The RCN delegation (including Kathini Cameron and Lisa Jokivirta) met at Bagarstugan in Mariehamn with alumni and some of the founding team (Kjell Nilsson and Leif Jansson) of the partnership between UWC Red Cross Nordic and Åland. Our programme was coordinated by Wille Walve (RCN alumnus, Minister of Social Affairs and Health for the Government of Åland, former RCN Board member, and former Head of the Åland delegation to the Nordic Council). Wille also set up a meeting with the Government including the Premier Mrs Katrin Sjögren – and this provided us with the opportunity to present the College and Åland's special place within our Nordic cooperation.

We received a message from Gunnevi Normann: 'Har ingen som helst möjlighet att delta, sorry! Ivar Lund-M tog kontakt med mej våren 1988, kom hit på våren. Jag tänkte på idén, blev med i styret. Många resor till Norge, otaliga samtal med "ivrrarna" Tom G och Ivar L-M innan skolan kunde öppna 1995. Det stämmer att Stig Nordman var med bland de grundande. Önskar givande möten och ber om min hälsning. Med vänlig hälsning'.

Following in the footsteps of Elías (Argentina), Abel (first year from Eritrea and representing the National Committee of Sudan), was invited to spend a month this summer studying on a scholarship provided by Marlborough College in the U.K. As part of his experience, he visited Oxford to gather data for his Extended Essay and particularly enjoyed working alongside fellow students in the Chemistry laboratory.

The impact of the US 'Executive Order' has had significant impact on one of our students (Yordanos - Sudan). Our team needed to coordinate host families for her over the summer as she explored different ways of taking up her place at Luther College, USA. She is currently back in Sudan with a view to gaining robust paperwork which can help her access the scholarship in the US. This is a reminder to us of the extraordinary level of support we need to consider and provide for those of refugee status across UWC.

Over the summer, the College has been very busy with mission-related summer camps – including Red Cross Summer camps for underprivileged families and youth from the region, a Lion's Camp for the Disabled and a new initiative of running two weeks of adventure camps for local children (with parents at work). The number of summer camp participants hosted on

campus was 600. The Rektor expressed his thanks, in a series of addresses at the start of the academic year, to the Support, Administrative and UWC Connect staff on campus for their work and commitment over the course of June and July. Leonora, Daily Leader of UWC Connect, deserves special praise for her contribution and leadership over the summer. She is exploring new possibilities for developing outreach in an imaginative and mission-related way.

HMS Norge, the Royal Yacht, was spotted in our fjord during the course of the summer.

The IB results came through in early July. These were the best results over the past six years (when we began detailed year-by-year analysis of our results) – with the average score for all candidates entered for the diploma programme at 33.16/45 in contrast to 31.32/45.

	2016	2017
Candidates for diploma / course	91	94
No diploma awarded	9	10
Average score per IB subject for all students	5.22	5.43
Average for all students in year group	31.32	<b>33.16</b>
Average for those who passed the Diploma	33.53	34.67

These results continue to suggest that the college-wide focus on improving residential, pastoral and learning support systems has made an impact on each student’s overall experience and provided a sound platform for academic success at the end of the RCN programme.

Tess, the Student Board Rep, scored an outstanding 45/45. Belen, our blind student from Spain, scored a remarkable 28/45.

Three students had their offers rescinded by US universities (2 by Brown and 1 by Macalester) for a significant and serious disparity between IB final results and predictions by RCN. This continues to be an ongoing challenge. However, there are clear signs that most staff members are developing accuracy and consistency in prediction. Pete, as IB Diploma Coordinator, is currently focusing on ensuring consistency (and transparency) between grades given to students over the two years and those entered into the IB system six weeks before the exams.

The Summer Course students, teachers and volunteers arrived on campus in late July for a three week prologue to the launch of the academic year with the emphasis on language acquisition and confidence building for a smaller cohort. Pete Wilson, the Summer Course Coordinator, was responsible for the overview of an insightful and committed delivery of a revised programme - and was assisted by a team of teachers and volunteers who made important and supportive contributions throughout. The teaching was led by Lis and Paco (Sweden / Portugal) and they were supported by three RCN alumni volunteers – Carolina (Poland), Ray Nee (Singapore), and Riccardo (Spain)

The Summer Course group also included our two new members of the Survivors of Conflict programme: Delroy (Liberia) and Kik (Cambodia). We also invited students who had completed the RCN Foundation Year to return as volunteers. At the end of the Summer course, three students were recommended and invited to join the Foundation Year: Kik (Cambodia), Omar (Western Sahara) and Soledad (SOS – Argentina).

The Maintenance Team worked very hard throughout the summer. Alf Magne, the Head of Maintenance, worked tirelessly throughout his first summer in charge to support the projects. At the start of term, some work remained incomplete (one residence on Teachers' Hill and the extension of Denmark House) – however, we have managed to find solutions to support their completion.

Other areas of focus for the team on campus over the summer included: Admissions Development Team and student entry, salary adjustments for August 2017, developing a Press Kit document for dealing with press, designing promotional material for both our Sogn og Fjordane IB places and our host family programme, and website development amongst other work.

Over the first weekend of August, we hosted the biennial alumni reunion on campus – and it was a pleasure to welcome the graduates of 1997, 1998, 2006, 2007, and other guests (and lots of children) on behalf of UWC Red Cross Nordic. This was our first double reunion with alumni who left ten years ago and those who were in the founding generations over twenty years ago.

The weekend consisted of receptions, presentations by staff and alumni, a programme of activities (from kayaking to 'open mike' and impact sessions) and culminated in a final dinner in the kantine for staff, summer course students, alumni and other guests. The Rektor and Arne respectively gave a speech and presentation on current projects at the College and concrete ways that our alumni community can helpfully engage and connect with RCN. Ola, one of the Alumni Reps, spontaneously contributed to the session by challenging the year groups present to commit financially to supporting the next generations of students at RCN.

We are delighted to report that, through the work of Mostak (Alumni and Development Officer), we have managed to raise a scholarship, raised by alumni and friends, for a Foundation Year student.

### **Staff Introduction Week**

Evi (Stamina Helse) and our AMU team contributed to the design of this year's Staff Introduction Week with special focus / professional development inserted on a) explaining the expectations of a Norwegian Work Place and b) communications including email correspondence.

During the academic year 2016/7, we built new routines as to how to report and handle conflicts in the workplace. We continue to have isolated incidences of unprofessional conduct (especially through the use of email) in our workplace – and we trust that the training and a newly drafted policy on 'netiquette' tackles inappropriate conduct which affects the psychosocial work place of others.

Staff Introduction Week is an opportunity for staff to learn about the activities that have been happening on campus over the course of June and July, for Support and Education Staff to reconnect after the summer break, and for professional development / training and for preparation for the beginning of the academic year.

This year's Staff Introduction Week featured a 'pot luck' dinner, induction for new staff, meetings, presentations and discussions. Professional development included training in the following areas: the advisor role, the Norwegian Work Environment, communications with a special focus on email etiquette, a Psycho-Social First Aid Course run by the Sogn og Fjordane Red Cross, and Safety Net Training.

Our training focused on a) creating a happy and supportive work environment for staff and b) improving the student experience on campus. Staff Introduction Week's main purpose is on working together and community building – how best to support each other as we, in turn, seek to support the students in our care.

We welcomed the following members of staff at the start of this term:

<b>Name</b>	<b>Position</b>	<b>Nationality</b>
<b>Jimmy Kindree</b>	English	USA
<b>Libby Mason</b>	Theatre, TOK	British
<b>Hana Le Cam</b>	Visual Art	French
<b>Jinzhong Wang</b>	Chinese	Chinese
<b>He Jiqing (Sarah)</b>	Chinese interim	Chinese
<b>Jennifer Griffiths</b>	EVS Red Cross	English
<b>Taren Kindree</b>	Advisor	USA
<b>Jelena Belamaric</b>	Biology	Croatian
<b>Josh Macfarlane</b>	Leirskule Assistant	British

Libby Mason, the former Dean of Students at UWC Pearson College, has also joined us for the term as a teacher and will also be contributing to developing residential policies and our drama programme at RCN.

Following helpful feedback from new staff this time last year and suggestions from Ola and Ellen, we continue to improve the induction programme with emphasis on welcome and support (both professional and personal) to make the transition as smooth and straightforward as possible for new staff. New routines and the College Personnel Handbook have made a huge difference.

The following staff members have taken on new responsibilities: Pete (UK) has taken on the double role of Acting Deputy Rektor and IB Diploma Coordinator; and Simon (UK) has taken on the roles of House Mentor of Finland House, Foundation Year Coordinator and UWC RCN Short Course Coordinator.

The following staff will be taking up new positions from October.

Name	Position	Nationality
<b>Anette Traa</b>	Operational Team Leader	Norwegian
<b>Ellen Bye</b>	Admin Team Leader	Norwegian
<b>Mona Mari Hatlebrette (Oct)</b>	Chef	Norwegian
<b>Ann Marit Kireteig</b>	Accounts Assistant	Norwegian
<b>Sanja Krvavac</b>	Psychologist (P-T)	Bosnia & Herzegovina

We are delighted that, through an initiative with RKHR and two local kommunes, we shall have a psychologist on campus for two days a week in term time.

Monica Greeley visited UWC RCN from 29<sup>th</sup> May to 1<sup>st</sup> June and produced a CIS Membership Evaluation Report at the end of July. Following the visit and publication of this report, UWC RCN has been awarded membership of the Council of International Schools.

The CIS Evaluator wrote in her conclusion: ‘...the report conveyed a school very confident of its identity and its goals as well as a school seeking to reflect, analyze, and improve in order to more fully honor the UWC Mission and the RCN Pillars.

Paramount both in the Report and during the visit were the deep commitment to developing intercultural competence and experiencing and respecting diversity. The extent to which the school goes to ensure the student body is 'deliberately diverse' including its socio-economic composition is extraordinary and inspirational. The effort to emulate the real life experiences of those struggling to live in a just, ethical, nurturing environment is similarly extraordinary. The 'On the Run' refugee simulation which Year 1 students experienced together with the subsequent reflections and conversations was exemplary.’

Pete deserves special thanks for the extraordinary amount of time and effort he put into coordinating the approach to this stage of accreditation and to organizing Monica’s programme on campus and the contribution of colleagues.

We are expected to address the ‘Recommendations’ for focus outlined in the report – and to enter into the two year CIS accreditation process by July of 2019. On Alistair’s return from his

sabbatical in Jan 2018, both he and Pete will plan and implement the next stage – a school improvement process achieved through peer review and evaluation.

We have already established a Working Party with Kåre Dale (AMU Secretary / Health & Safety Officer) as Chair to follow up on the CIS recommendation to review and improve our teaching and learning spaces on campus – and look forward to the Working Party's report and recommendations in advance of the November Board Meeting.

Staff Introduction Week culminated in a trip by many staff to Åmot Operagard. On the Sunday, Dan Silfwerin (Swedish and English teacher – and House Mentor of Sweden House) was invited to perform in the finale of 'Mimi Goes Glamping'. Bergen National Opera created this community opera based on the children's story, 'Paper Bag Princess' / 'Papirose-Prinsessn' by Robert Munsch.

The director John Ramster and chorus master Håkon Matti Skrede and other members of the BNO team will be here on campus at UWC Red Cross Nordic later this term working with students to prepare a special performance for Saturday 18th November.

### **Student Introduction Week**

The second years returned on Saturday 19<sup>th</sup> August - after another highly successful Bergen Day coordinated by Kåre, Thor, Hildegunn and Barbara - with the first years arriving on Monday 21<sup>st</sup>. We improved our routines to ensure that first year students did not arrive on campus in the middle of the night – as exciting as this can be, it also can be disorientating for new arrivals. All Monday buses arrived no later than 2130.

We redesigned Student Introduction Week so that second years were in class by Thursday and first years by Friday. The new design put pressure on the class allocation for first years but, on all other counts, was a significant improvement on the experience. The student-led Mandela 67 event was a success and this year, at the invitation of the Student Council, we allocated more staff to the Saturday party so that there was no undesirable behaviour.

Madhulika Singh coordinated a first rate Student Introduction Week with the support of staff and second years.

The Admissions Department was very pleased to report that all expected students were on campus by the end of Student Introduction Week. However, there had been a miscalculation over the course of the summer and it was reported that we had two empty beds for male students at the start of term. The Admissions Development Team has been in touch with other Colleges and the International Office and has taken one student from Italy (top of the reserve list after a



summer approach post clearing list) and one from Venezuela (given the current political situation).

The opening of term has also seen some staff taking, in partnership with a group of second years, the lead in developing 'The RCN Safety Net'. They have placed a focus on 'consent' in the opening few weeks – an essential development at RCN.

The second full weekend of term saw a group of students attend Ridderdagene, the sister event to Ridderrennet. For the past five years, RCN has been invited to take part in Ridderdagene – an annual event where people come together for a weekend at Storedal in South-Eastern Norway to prove that everybody can participate in, and enjoy outdoor activities and sports regardless of ability.

There have been lots of other exciting activities including the Postveitrimmen, Eid El Adha (Festival of Sacrifice), the second year show and a visit from Børge Brende, Minister of Foreign Affairs on the eve of the General Election.

## **Developments**

On Friday 25<sup>th</sup> August, the resignation of the Rektor was announced.

There has been a great deal of preparation and activity over the months of July and August in preparation for UWC Day / HM Queen Sonja's visit planned for the 21<sup>st</sup> September.

On Monday 11<sup>th</sup> September, our Standing Committees met for the first time – all were asked to consider how to improve the provisional programme for RCN Life Skills, how to revise their pages on the College's website and how to revise the relevant areas of the College's Action Plan.

We have been invited to send a representative to the Nansen Refugee Prize in Geneva.

I would like to finish by drawing your attention to two pieces of correspondence received – one from Per Wretlind (outgoing Head of the Swedish National Committee) and the second from Monica Greeley (CIS):

*Per: 'It has been a pleasure to work closely with RCN over these years, and I appreciate the developments that we can note. There is still much to be done, as you know better than I, but I think much has improved for the better.'*

*Monica: 'UWC RCN is a unique learning environment for students and adults alike. Many thanks for ensuring that this Membership Evaluation Visit was full and rich, providing a transparent view of the school and stakeholders. Thanks to all faculty, staff, and students who were kind and generous with their time and patience. Engaging in school life for two and a half days was a truly valuable educational experience. Yours is a school filled with deep empathy, hope, and conviction that together you are "...a force to unite people, nations and cultures for peace and a sustainable future." Congratulations on what you have created and the ways in which you will continue to improve through your Strategy 2020 and beyond.'*

Two important reminders that we are heading in the right direction.

Richard D A Lamont  
Rektor

10<sup>th</sup> September 2017